

# NEWS RELEASE

## DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION

### Commissioner Claire DeMatteis

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Presented by Jason P. Miller, Chief of Communications and Community Relations

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## DOC announces COVID-19 recoveries, additional test results

**Dover, DE --** The Delaware Department of Correction (DOC) today announced a **total of 8 inmates have recovered from COVID-19**, including 5 new recoveries in addition to 3 announced earlier this week. These inmates are currently housed in a transitional housing unit in the JTVCC COVID-19 treatment center. The DOC also announced that a Correctional Officer has fully recovered from COVID-19, in addition to a Probation Officer who the DOC noted earlier this week had made a full recovery and has returned to work.

These recoveries come as DOC continues an intensive two-week operation to combat COVID-19 within the two facilities where positive inmate COVID cases have occurred, building on the daily temperature checks and close monitoring of more than 1,750 inmates at these facilities. This targeted operation is concentrated in buildings at James T. Vaughn Correctional Center (JTVCC) and Sussex Community Corrections Center (SCCC) that have experienced COVID cases and includes:

- Twice daily inmate temperature checks for more than 1,750 inmates;
- Distribution of face masks **to all inmates at JTVCC and SCCC, bringing to more than 2,100 the number of inmates issued face masks across correctional facilities**;
- Expanded proactive inmate COVID testing;
- Increased use of specialized cleaning, on top of the current twice-daily cleanings, utilizing a disinfecting machine that employs an airborne mist to sterilize entire rooms;
- Voluntary COVID testing to all Officers at JTVCC and SCCC in recognition of the continued risk of infection from outside as community spread continues.

The DOC today also announced additional COVID-19 test results. Review an informational chart of positive COVID-19 cases among DOC employees, contracted staff and inmates for each DOC facility by [clicking HERE](#).

“Currently, only 11 inmates who have tested positive have symptoms of COVID-19, with 22 asymptomatic inmates who have tested positive through our proactive measures displaying no symptoms of the virus,” **Commissioner Claire DeMatteis said.** “There is no evidence of COVID in 7 correctional facilities in Wilmington, New Castle, Dover or Georgetown. The few cases to date have been contained to the prison in Smyrna and a work release center in Georgetown. Inmates who have tested positive are all receiving excellent care in DOC’s COVID Treatment Center or at an area hospital.”

The latest positive test results are as follows:

- **One inmate in a medium security building at James T. Vaughn Correctional Center (JTVCC)** where a Correctional Officer who recently tested positive was assigned and two other inmates recently tested positive. As part of its continued proactive, preventative measures, these buildings have been under close monitoring, including twice daily forehead temperature checks and distribution of face masks to building residents. After reporting symptoms of illness on April 20 the inmate was immediately placed in isolation in the prison infirmary and a COVID-19 test was administered. The positive test result was received on April 23. The inmate remains in the infirmary in stable condition.
- **One inmate in a minimum security building at James T. Vaughn Correctional Center (JTVCC)** that has been closely monitored for more than two weeks, including twice daily forehead temperature checks and distribution of face masks to building residents. After reporting symptoms of illness on April 22 the inmate was immediately placed in isolation in the prison infirmary and a COVID-19 test was administered. The inmate was subsequently moved to a local hospital for treatment where the inmate remains in stable condition. The positive test result was received on April 24.
- **Four Correctional Officers, including two assigned to JTVCC, one assigned to Howard R. Young Correctional Institution (HRYCI), and one primarily assigned to SCCC.** Two Correctional Officers were last on duty 6 days ago - on April 18 - and two Correctional Officers were last on duty 4 days ago - on April 20. After beginning to experience flu-like symptoms, the Officers began to self-isolate at home, and as symptoms developed sought medical attention, at which time COVID-19 tests were administered. The positive COVID-19 test results were received by the Officers on April 22, April 23 and April 24 and subsequently verified by the DOC. This brings the total to 25 Correctional Officers statewide to test positive for the virus.

No additional information will be provided about the identity of the inmates or the officers for privacy protection.

Note: The Department of Correction is doubling the safeguards recommended by the CDC to determine when inmates have recovered from COVID-19 and are safe to be taken out of isolation, by requiring that 14 days, rather than 7 days, have passed since the positive COVID test was administered, that 3 days have passed during which the patient remains fever and symptom-free AND that a follow up COVID test returns negative. For inmates with immunocompromised underlying health issues, DOC has adopted an even stricter recovery standard of 21 days.

The DOC is employing a variety of prevention, screening, cleaning and containment measures to guard against the spread of the novel coronavirus, including:

- All persons, including Officers, administrative staff and probationers who enter any Level V prison, Level IV violation of probation or work release center, or Probation and

Parole Office are screened for COVID-19, including a series of questions and a forehead temperature check with a thermometer

- Staff who present with symptoms are sent home to self-quarantine and directed to contact their health care provider.
- Newly arriving inmates are held in isolation for the first 14 days, during which they are carefully monitored, including daily temperature checks with a thermometer.
- DOC has implemented extra daily cleaning of DOC facilities and is using specialized fogging machines to disinfect entire rooms of common areas, housing units and workspaces.
- Face masks are being worn by Correctional Officers and contract healthcare workers as a protection for inmates, Officers and other employees. All Correctional Officers have been wearing face masks since April 10. Face masks have been provided to inmates who are in infirmaries, those with compromised immune systems, those with certain institutional jobs, such as food service, and those in housing buildings where inmates have tested positive for COVID-19.
- Most Probationer visits with Probation Officers were transitioned to phone check-ins in March to support social distancing measures. In addition, the DOC has temporarily suspended in-person prison programming to reduce the movement of people into facilities and movement of groups of people within facilities.

Certain programs, including treatment and education programs and religious programming, are being transitioned to a virtual video format. Inmates continue to have outside recreation opportunities within their confined areas and continue to have access to phones to stay in regular contact with their loved ones. DOC is also expanding the use of electronic tablets among the inmate population, where available.

Get updated information about the DOC's response to COVID-19 and read previous announcements of positive COVID-19 cases by visiting <https://doc.delaware.gov>, and follow *decorrection* on Facebook and Twitter.

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